



H.Con.Res. 317 – Condemning the Burmese regime's undemocratic constitution and scheduled referendum

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 317 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) on March 13, 2008. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to the resolution on April 30, 2008.

H.Con.Res. 317 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on May 5, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 317 resolves that Congress:

- Denounces the one-sided, undemocratic, and illegitimate act by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to legalize military rule with the constitution;
- Firmly insists that Burma's military regime begin a meaningful tri-partite dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1990 election winning parties and ethnic nationality representatives toward national reconciliation, and the full restoration of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and internationally recognized human rights for all Burmese citizens;
- Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, detained Buddhist monks, and all other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience;
- Denounces the SPDC for its failure to comply with the United Nation's recommendations and engage in a meaningful time-bound tri-partite dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1990 election winning parties and ethnic nationality representatives;
- Condemns the military regime's constitution and scheduled referendum;
- Calls for the SPDC to comply fully and immediately with the recommendations made by United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari and the United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement issued on October 11, 2007;
- Urges the President to call for the United Nations Security Council to not accept or recognize the SPDC's constitution which will be the outcome of the referendum;
- Urges the President to call for the United Nations Security Council to pass a binding resolution, which will instruct the regime to fully comply with the recommendations made by United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari and the United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement, and strengthen the mandate of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to engage in a meaningful and time-bound dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1990 election winning parties and ethnic nationality representatives towards an inclusive democratic national reconciliation;
- Urges the President to push for a comprehensive arms embargo against the Burmese military regime at the United Nations Security Council so that weapons produced by foreign countries,



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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including Ukraine, China, and Russia, who currently sell weapons to Burma's military regime, can no longer contribute the atrocities committed by Burma's military regime against civilians; and

- Urges the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to involve itself more deeply in reaching out to the Burmese democracy movement and work with the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General to end junta political intransigence and promote meaningful political dialogue.

BACKGROUND

From 1962 – 1988, General Ne Win ran the Burmese government initially as a military ruler, then as a self-appointed president, and finally as a political king. The National League for Democracy (NLD) is the main opposition party to the sitting Burmese government regime. Despite NLD's decisive victory in the 1990 national multiparty legislative elections, the ruling junta refused to hand over power to the NLD. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize winning leader of the NLD, was placed under house arrest by the junta from 1989 – 1995, and then from 2000-2002. In May of 2003, he Suu Kyi was imprisoned and later placed back under house arrest.

In August of 2007, led by Buddhist monks and activists groups favoring democracy, many thousands of Burmese people peacefully marched in protest of the Burmese junta's increase in fuel prices. The following month, the Burmese government killed at least 13 people and arrested thousands of protestors in an effort to suppress the demonstration.

The recommendations of United Nations (UN) Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari as well as the October 11, 2007 UN Security Council Presidential Statement call for end of violence in Burma, the beginning of a dialogue between the sitting government of Burma and the concerned political and ethnic parties, and for the Burmese government to release all political prisoners.

[Link to October 11, 2007 UN Security Council Presidential Statement](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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